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POETRY	FOUR POEMS SONG OF TWO FRIENDS SONG FROM A PLAY AN APPLE BEFORE BEDTIME TO T. S. ELIOT AND OTHERS	PATRICK ANDERSON
	FOR MRS. SHAW	J. W. LIEBER
	TWO POEMS THE SPINNING QUESTION RETURN	FRANCIS BARRY
ARTICLES	THE POETRY OF PATRICK ANDERSON	JOHN SUTHERLAND
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Four Poems

Patrick Anderson

SONG OF TWO FRIENDS

My friend was not of my mind:
I said "The moors and woods
are beautiful alone
under the tragic birds,
moan and monotone
of wind, the glistening wires
of Cornwall and despair—
surely we are most
ourselves when lost, the rain
sad as a homesick soldier,
storm savaging his hair,
no bread but banquet stone."
I told him nature is
sweetest when you can see
through miles without a place
to fading sky, or sea
fading in emptiness,
but he had different views,
would have his green controlled
with lawn and balustrade
and eighteenth century urn
and people in a house—
figures that talk and turn,
the window-empty face
condensed into concern
till, seeing over wine
some uniform or grace,
both glance and glass would burn!
I was not of his mind.

I said "The body is
like a dark lantern which
when the shutter's drawn

floods from a secret niche
that yellow sullen beam
that shows across the lawn
trees twisted like a witch
or shadowy stratagem
of apes that kiss and touch;
what was a moment before
a Puritan creaking black
throws smoke and smoky fire,
light born of sin and dark,
love loved in fear and crime . . ."
But my friend answered me
"Though sin dies hard
what's lovely to the eye
and natural is joy:
a girl in a painted bed
under a canopy
of twisted gold and red,
or a young Grecian boy
plucking his teacher's beard.
We were of different minds.

My friend was not of my mind
but to my dark and light
contrasted like a kind
and kindling opposite
his mild accepting state:
his is the sunburned land
where in collusive night
and admirable day
the ordered beauties stand,
both flesh and statuary.
I locked the wicked bath
and hid the rose away,
turning my windows north
to feed upon a sky
where a cold sail set forth
into unearthly wind—
but my friend answered me
"Miraculous loneliness
makes the body gross:
the icier the glass

and the great glacier dreamed,
the darker the release.
Sin gnaws the hermit's mind."

We were not of one mind
but two minds still may fall
like logs upon that fire
which burns and blesses all—
my dream of life is death
which leaves out work and wit,
the entangling temporal breath
loving its opposite:
his hedonistic thought
may often fail to see
hunger and misery.
Yet I have learned from him
somewhat to lay aside
the atrocious diadem
of fivefold cloud on cloud,
dream wrapped up in a dream
and the dreamer's fear and pride;
and he has learned of me
some of my world's division,
the hope beyond all bounds
and the hopeless prison
firing my liberty.
So we may link our hands
(and though I more incline
to his position)
be both now of two minds.

SONG FROM A PLAY

The green gray feathers of the trees
stand softly on the land,
an elm is cooling with a fan
the fathom in her hand,
and Spring I cry,
love I try
deep into Helen's dancing eye.

The rain and thunder sit about
like clumps of water weed,
light lessens in the evening pool
as pale Ophelias fade
but Spring I cry,
love I try
deep into Helen's dancing eye.

Down softening streets the boys and girls
in ceremonies stroll,
the birds sing beautiful and chill
like polishing a pearl,
and Spring I cry,
love I try
deep into Helen's dancing eye.

The rain is holding up a bowl
where the gold lightning swims,
blossoms on boughs and then a bell—
the sweat runs off our limbs,
O Spring I cry,
love I try
deep into Helen's dancing eye.

There is no thunder in her hair,
upon her lips no rain,
yet world and weather through that door
have come alive again,
and Spring I cry,
love I try
deep into Helen's dancing eye.

The tulips growing in the grass
can shine and make one sad,
the window darkens, in the blood
there are both guilt and God,
yet Spring I cry,
love I try
deep into Helen's dancing eye.

AN APPLE BEFORE BEDTIME

The house sinks below the horrible hill
and rag whimpering field. In a whisper
dark blows up pine, creaks in a barn door;
stone rings now, bats flit, water gums in a pail,
Angelus bell
has answer
only from pale lakes, only from whole dales—

and that boy now, waiting for his mother to light
the one lamp, clings to her tall and turning
dress. Soon she will have it burning
bright against field creep, armies of mink and stoat,
and the barking
dark, the brute
pressed at the glass. The first flame, flickering,

smokes a moment and will not hold or steady
and during that the house was never so cold,
china like mountain water, curlew called
the pass of space, and all the shadows empty,
but worst of all
now buried
out on the outer dark that room and that boy

abandoned forever it seems and looking in
from clouded and ragged yard with a pale face,
but the mother draws the folds to be windless
and her hand across his brow like a second curtain:
and now his wish
and sly aim
long beyond bedtime to whisper himself and pass

eating a last slow apple. Keep still, keep still,
rose coal not fall from fire nor murmur
dogs on their paws of dream nor ever
lamp flare, nor his mother's mild nods fall
too deep, or creak
of chair awake her
but apple and hour, all cradled, be still as wool.

So, turning the apple between his hands, he threads
light into shadow, pictures on walls to stay,
all coloured countries rounding their night and day
and apple's freckled skin all firelight kindred,
books and birds be
in nested wood,
lest suddenly his mother conclusion say
by crooked stair and cupboard-witch away
to your cold bed!

TO T. S. ELIOT AND OTHERS

With apologies to Wystan
who polished the piston,
tinkered with the starter,
motored through the era
but faltered later;
with apologies to Rainer
who made pain plainer,
so tremulous the whisper
to Misses of this Mister
the air continues rarer;
and also some to Stephen,
the flowery and uneven,
running at a pylon
half crying and half smilin'
to show his wooly lamb;
and lots, of course, to Thomas
who puked with promise,
hid under the table,
did it with a bible
as soon as he was able;
and many to Tom
the celibate one
who rearranged the metre,
dressed up in a mitre
put in a bomb,
pulled out a plum.

The Poetry of Patrick Anderson

John Sutherland

Although the publication of Patrick Anderson's two collections of poetry has been greeted almost with critical indifference, his work, it seems to me, has a two-fold significance for the critic of Canadian poetry. In the first place, although he is a young poet still in his early thirties, many of his poems are of decided interest and several represent an achievement of more than Canadian value; in the second place, his work focuses much that is characteristic of modern poetry in Canada, and has influenced a number of contemporary Canadian writers—again, in spite of his age, and although he is a poet born and educated in England whose residence in Canada has been comparatively brief. In this essay I shall attempt to evaluate his achievement and indicate his promise, and, apart from a few references chiefly to his ideological ties with Spender, I shall not deal either with his sources or his own influence. For this reason, and because this aspect of his poetry has gone altogether unnoticed, I should like briefly to outline its nature here. Naturally, since he is still in process of development, Anderson's sources are numerous, but they might be summed up by saying that he has taken an intellectual lead from the early Auden and Spender while learning from the technical examples of Barker and Thomas. It is in giving an eloquent, and perhaps not unindividual expression to these tendencies of modern English poetry that he has influenced modern poetry in Canada. He has exerted much influence on the development of Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw and on the development of so individual a poet as P. K. Page; he has been a stimulating example, though not a model, for Louis Dudek in his poems of social criticism, and for Irving Layton in his transition from tradition to experiment; and in this indirect manner he has influenced older poets such as F. R. Scott, in poems like "Mid-Term Examination" and "Corner Drugstore", or A. M. Klein in the Canadian themes and surrealistic techniques of his "The Rocking Chair and Other Poems". Occasionally, there may be a mutual exchange: Anderson's description of the Jew with "his groceries and sorrows in spiritual bags" follows the "knapsack of their sorrows" in Layton's "Jewish Main Street", and he may be more susceptible to Canadian literary influences than an isolated example would indicate. A study of these influences, mutual or not, would be most valuable; and the investigation of the English sources could provide a measure

of Anderson's achievement, for his problem in one sense has been to fuse the 'classicism' of the early thirties with the 'romantic' reaction towards the end of the decade. It is a task still to be done: but so, in reality, is the examination of his poetry as a whole. Apart from a few brief reviews of "A Tent For April" and "The White Centre", the criticism of his work is non-existent.

Two of the reviewers refer to the technical quality whose implications I shall explore in this essay. L. A. MacKay speaks of Anderson's 'sense of movement'; Alan Crawley, the editor of "Contemporary Verse", considers that the poet's chief asset lies in abundance and beauty of imagery, 'especially in imagery of motion'. There are plentiful illustrations of the accuracy of these remarks throughout the poetry, and Anderson, in fact, is attracted to subject-matter giving a free play to images of motion: nearly one-third of the poems in "The White Centre" are based on physical action, as such titles as "Canoe", "Dance", "Sleigh-Ride", "Machine" and others would indicate. Perhaps the most striking illustration is the way he will fashion a conceit by contrasting a stationary with a moving thing—as, for example,

> only to find her glass already up,
> already busy polishing the bright
> badge on its cap, and every sparkling button.

or

> a cripple crack that suddenly throws its crutches
> amongst the children playing in the sun.

Indeed, when we examine the poems dealing with physical activity, we find that many of them depend on such contrasts of stillness and movement, and, generally, that the imagery of motion can be shown to possess this dual quality. This quality is not only a technical determinant in such poems as "Rink" or "Dance", but also, for example, in "Drinker", "Hunter Returning", "Desert", or in "The Statues", a remarkable tour-de-force revolving on such paradoxes of rest and motion. An eagerness to demonstrate such paradoxes accounts for technical excesses (as in "The Self Is Steep") and, properly controlled, produces a poem of such beauty as "Camp", perhaps Anderson's most finished achievement. In "Camp" two types of images are developed in an almost dialectic pattern. The stillness of the landscape there is like the thesis of the dialectic; the motion through heaven of the sun and of the bird, 'crier and diver' acts as the antithesis, until both are combined in the beautiful description of the children:

> And no one ever came
> when we were down so far
> with our heads on our arms

sleeping in the grass
except some children who
ran naked through the blurred
noon to the blazing pool
and spoke into our dream
by being beautiful
and never spoke a word.

Such patterns of imagery are not only dominant technically, but, as I shall attempt to show, express the central paradox of the poetry.

I believe no critic has attempted to define that symbol which Anderson himself considered of sufficient importance to use as the title of his second volume: the white centre. We find the symbol of the centre employed directly in five of Anderson's poems: "War Dead" (published in "The Book of Canadian Poetry", but uncollected); "Montreal Mountain" from "A Tent For April"; and "Poem On Canada", "The Lovers" and "The Statues" from the collection "The White Centre". The fact that the 'white centre' itself is never mentioned in any of these poems might seem to indicate that it is just a rhetorical title; but, with equal logic, it might be taken to prove what is actually the case, that the symbol is of central importance in the poetry. Let us compare these two passages in which a 'centre' is used:

And where in the cleanest landscape we,
hardly known to ourselves, are running
to some excitement like the centre of light—
a child has turned, a hole in his head.

(War Dead)

The matter is the promise that was never taken, she replies,
above your heads the cool and giant air
and the future aching round you like an aura . . .
The matter is
the skiers, she replies, athletically lonely,
drowsed in their delight, who hunt and haunt
the centres of their silence and excitement . . .
the matter is being lost in a dream of motion.

(Poem On Canada)

There is a divergence of meaning and mood between these two passages (though it is only partial), but there is a remarkable similarity of metaphor. The northern landscape of ice and snow in "Poem On Canada" reflects the 'cleanest landscape' of "War Dead"; the 'future

. . . aching like an aura' resembles the 'centre of light' in the other poem; the youthful skiers are reminiscent of the child standing in the 'centre of light'. There is one direct link between the centres themselves—both are identified with 'excitement'; and it might be argued that the 'silence' of the centre in "Poem On Canada" is present in "War Dead", for the effect of the four lines I have quoted is vacuumatic like an action recorded by slow-motion camera. An analysis of the other poems in which the centre appears would show that it consists of the same general group of images: it has the whiteness of snow, the purity and clearness of crystal; it is the light and the light falling over landscape; it is the statue and the stone; it is Canada and the North, and a lonely place inhabited by adolescents, athletes and lovers. The 'white centre' itself does not appear in the poetry because it is not one easily-nameable thing; but rather, 'the centre is a host of images' present in many of Anderson's poems besides those in which the word 'centre' is used. Yet the host of images can be reduced to the two main attributes—of 'silence' and 'excitement'—which appear directly in the "Poem On Canada" and are implicit in many other poems. In fact, as we may now see, 'silence' and 'excitement' are really other terms for the qualities of Anderson's technique already defined, for the 'excitement' is the 'motion' and the 'silence' the 'quiescence' that we discussed above. In "War Dead" the stanza turns on the contrast between the 'running' and 'excitement' and the sudden cessation of motion with the death of the child; in "Poem On Canada" there is a similar contrast between the still northland and the moving skiers, who, under the country's spell, are 'drowsed in their delight' and 'hunt and haunt the centres of their silence and excitement'. In both poems a synthesis of rest and motion is achieved: such is the involuntary motion of those who are running "hardly known to ourselves" and of the skiers "lost in a dream of motion". Such a synthesis is not merely a technical device for the resolution of a metaphorical paradox, but signifies the effort to bring together two conflicting ideas and attitudes in these poems of the centre. The white centre is the repository for the two leading conceptions or beliefs of the poetry as a whole, one of which is given the attribute of motion and the other that of stillness.

I shall pay most attention to these two main meanings of the centre, but it has a number of other possible meanings. The statement of Dylan Thomas, 'the centre is a host of images', occurs in a passage where he describes his creative method. Thomas' influence on Anderson is apparent in such a poem as "Summer's Joe", and there may be a connection between the centre as he defines it and the white centre

of Anderson. Insofar as Thomas defines a method which depends on a metaphorical unity in diversity (C. Day-Lewis transcribes his statement as, 'At the centre of my poems there is not a single image, but a host of images'), and insofar as he insists that his method is both creative and destructive, there may be some link with Anderson's poem, "The Lovers", where the lovers merge in a oneness involving 'the sun, the air' and 'cover . . . with each other's youth' a centre from which they draw creative strength but which the poet identifies with 'the marble place of death'. The lovers are variously described as 'metaphors' and 'artificers'; and they are generically related to the other artistic inhabitants of the centre, the Greek statues that occupy it in the poem, "The Statues". In any event, these conceptions of a oneness in plurality, and of the union of life and death, indicate definitely one sense in which the centre is used—the metaphysical. Occasionally these metaphysical meanings also acquire a religious cast: in the autobiographical "The Self Is Steep" the poet describes his state as 'cloudy Genesis where God's . . . hands undecided, dangling, dip and dream', and in "The Softness of the Hair" the 'light' is symbolic of a oneness that divides into the plurality of life but also stands above that plurality. In the latter poem

> where light tears up its circles everywhere,
> fate flies its feather
> and birds fly round the folly of history, and cry

the light is a centre that has 'circles everywhere', but a centre that preserves itself from the 'fate' and 'folly' of history. These lines embody a conception of history rather different from Anderson's usual view of it as a progressive social force, and the passage bears a resemblance to the lines of Eliot's "Burnt Norton" ('Garlic and sapphires in the mud . . . ') where 'light' is also seen as a unity producing yet reconciling the cross-purposes of history. In his metaphysical use of the centre Anderson appears to have Eliot in mind. He makes a rather similar use of the symbol of light; and his centre is conceived as a paradox of motion rather reminiscent of Eliot's 'still point of the turning world':

> at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement . . .
> Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

How close Anderson comes when he describes actual dancing, in "Dance" or "At the Ballet", to the paradox of the 'dance' in these lines!

The fact that this metaphysical and religious meaning usually plays a small role in the foreground of the poetry should not blind us to its constant presence in the background. Stephen Spender, through whom Anderson may receive his Eliot, is a relevant example here. Spender's use of a 'still centre' owes something to the 'still point', both in expression and idea, for with his adoption of this symbol Spender posits a clear division between the 'appearance' and 'reality' of the world and breaks with his earlier point of view. In Spender's development the 'still centre' represents a metaphysical, and ultimately religious, view of things: but he differs from Eliot in that he sees his godhead working out its way within humanity and his centre within the human personality. Since, in contrast to Eliot, his dominant concern is still with earthly progress, he emphasizes the ethical rather than the metaphysical aspect of his beliefs. He posits two main assumptions: (1) the existence within the self of a mold of innocence in which all ethical (and hence all real social) change is cast; (2) the possession by this innocence of qualities of beauty, truth and love, that continually modify, or should modify, the course of human progress. The same assumptions are made by Anderson, and, as I have expressed them here, sum up one of the two main meanings of the white centre and of the poetry in general. It is the blow to the realizable ideal that is lamented in the symbolic death of the child in "War Dead"; it is the continually reviving possibility of the ideal that is expressed by the skiers of "Poem On Canada". Like Spender, Anderson has symbolized the ideal truth or beauty in the adolescent, but he has also employed some of the symbols we mentioned above (ice, light, crystal and snow) to convey its 'immaculate perfection'. Generally, he has used the 'stillness' of the centre as Spender has done: it is when it comes to the social functioning of the ideal—to the centre conceived as motion—that he parts company with the later Spender. From the long view we may feel that there is no great difference between Anderson's beliefs and those of Spender in "Ruins and Visions" (see, for example, the poem which concludes "The White Centre", "The Statues"); but Anderson is critical in many poems of a non-political attitude, insisting that his 'platonic essence' can only be fulfilled through communist action, and asking the centre to do double duty as a political and spiritual sentinel. The 'white centre' is Spender's own symbol slightly modified, as if Anderson wished to acknowledge an association while offering a criticism.

The political ideas form the second of the two important areas of meaning in the centre, and, if we consider simply the over-all intention of the poetry so far published, they are the first in importance. In the majority of the political poems, Anderson is only a 'communist poet' in the sense in which that term was applied to Spender in the thirties: he criticizes the degenerate middle classes, expresses the aspirations as well as the internationalism of the working class, or occasionally points to the achievement of contemporary Russia. These ideas are present in isolation or in combination in his "Education", "Ski Train", "Night Out", "The Machine" and "Armaments Worker", among other poems from the two published collections, and in uncollected poems published in "Preview" and the "Preview Broadsheet". Anderson is more political than the early Spender, to the extent that he sometimes employs the details of communist history, or expresses philosophic concepts originating in Marxist writings. In "Landscape", "Ski Train" and "Canadian Scene" (part two), he expresses variously concepts of motion, of history and of the relationship between the individual and society, which he probably found in the "Feuerbach" of Engels. In "Winter In Montreal", and perhaps also in "Poem On Canada", he imagines the overthrow of the capitalist class by the proletariat, and also expresses the Marxist conception that capitalism must achieve a certain fulfillment or 'perfection' prior to such an event. (This is the main significance of the 'winter palace' and 'capitalist crystal' in "Winter In Montreal", and the symbolic intention of the 'worst winter' in "Poem On Canada", to judge by the many correspondences of this section with "Winter In Montreal".) Again, in the latter poem (which one critic described as a poem of the Canadian winter scene!) the poet expresses the belief, that for Canada the second great war is the important stage of a developing people's revolution, a forecast made in terms of an analogy with the first war and the revolution in Russia. This analogy is elaborated through repetitions of the symbol, the 'winter palace', in the line 'what comes with a limping stride is February', and in the last stanzas stating that a revolution is being fashioned jointly by the people at home and the soldiers at the front.

The same picture of a future created by working-class energies in time of war appears again in "Poem on Canada", where the poet also attempts a Marxist analysis of Canadian history. His view there

of Canadian history as the exploitation of a 'joint-stock frontier', his suggestion of a culmination through labour organization accentuated by depression and war, his idealization of Riel and flippant dismissal of Laurier, combined with other ideas and the assumption, 'historically one did what one could', indicate that "Poem On Canada" was not written before a reading of Stanley Ryerson's "French Canada". The use of the 'centre' in this poem carries more extensive political implications than in other poems where the symbol occurs. In "Montreal Mountain" the centre is merely described as the place 'where the dream is political and the strangers are you and you'; and the same vague idea of an all-embracing community is conveyed by the symbol in "The Lovers", where the lovers are exhorted to 'let islands swim together, let far frontiers . . . wind as your quiet breath into one wreath'. In "Poem On Canada" the idea of the centre acquires history and geography. The capitalist exploiters, as they hack at the joint-stock frontier of Canada, try unwittingly to pierce through to the centre; but they are less successful than the workers, who labour against injustice towards the community of peoples, and so towards that oneness which is the essence of the centre. The progress of the workers towards the centre and the 'future . . . aching like an aura', is symbolized in the passage quoted earlier in this essay by the skiers as they 'hunt and haunt . . . the centres of their silence and excitement'. In this poem, and in many of his political poems, Anderson is most concerned with a 'people's future', which he usually conceives as the product of war and revolutionary violence and expresses in images of motion. As he puts it in "Winter In Montreal", 'those who live in the capitalist crystal . . . surge like a revolutionary future about me'.

In drawing this connection between the political content and the imagery of motion, and the ethical content and the static images of ice, crystal, etc., I am, admittedly, somewhat simplifying the use of the centre and ignoring variations in its meaning that occur in isolated lines and passages (as, perhaps, in the lines just quoted from "Winter In Montreal"). To elaborate would only emphasize the difficulties inherent in Anderson's varied application of the symbol, and his efforts to have his poetry contain two incongruous groups of ideas. Marxism does not readily cohere with ethical idealism, a fact the poet tends to overlook. Marxists not only advocate strategic means that by-pass principles of truth and justice, but also view the relationship between ethics and society from a relative standpoint quite alien to the idealist one. In expressing the two points of view Anderson tends, as I say, to overlook their contradictions, or he attempts a reconciliation in the sentimental terms of a 'lovely politics' that are 'entirely

love'. The sentimental view is found in "The Lovers", one of the poems of the centre: the lovers, 'farmers of fields which suddenly turn white', are engaged, as though qualified by this circumstance, in 'blue-printing azures, builders of the truth'; they automatically manage so that 'far frontiers . . . wind as their quiet breath into one wreath'. The winding together of the frontiers has an increment of political meaning, as we have seen; but the theme of political necessity is almost, if not quite, abandoned in this poem. There is just a hint of the problem in the curious little contradiction between the assertion in the stanza before the last—'for, though you dream, you are artificers'—and the statement immediately following that, being 'builders of the Truth', the lovers must neither 'sleep now nor dream this little while of wars'. What is merely suggested here is the theme of "Snow and Sleep". This poem also concludes with an adjuration to lovers to awake from sleep, but with an emphasis and in terms that seem to condemn the attitude of "The Lovers":

> Though in times of distress
> the childish lovers would play
> in the snowforts of their weakness,
> in the golden gaze
> and crazy glow
> of their intimate heyday they know
> death's coldblue
> blindman shadow.

The lovers awaken from sleep in order to fight death's 'blindman shadow', whereas in the other poem they are told reassuringly that they lie 'with random grace . . . upon the marble place of death'. The qualities they possessed in "The Lovers" as artificers are now scornfully dismissed:

> As though in today's crisis
> one could wear so easily
> the colour of innocence
> or of sickness,
> as though today one could go
> with white money
> to the false peace of Christmas

—and not only are innocence and peace and the love symbolized here by Christmas categorically dismissed, but they are condemned as neurotic:

> as though one could try to see

deep in one's frozen breath
as in a looking glass
the ego of ivory.
No. No. Snow is
subterfuge chiefly
and crime shyly.

One might point to the fact that "Snow and Sleep" endeavours to parody Eliot's "The Hollow Men", as proof that Anderson intends here only a criticism of Eliot's beliefs and of the present religious reaction in general. But then, in doing so, he has had to aim his fire at almost the identical images and symbols that figured in "The Lovers", and he has stripped the 'lovers' of so many natural attributes that we wonder why he bothers with the name. If not in "The Lovers", then certainly in "Snow and Sleep", a poem purporting to condemn sentimentalism, it is relevant to ask what these bereft lovers are going to do with the 'world' mentioned in the last stanza when they wake up with it in their arms. Moreover, regarding the criticism of Eliot, it is fair to point out that it is made in the language habitually used for the symbol of the centre, remembering in this connection Anderson's indebtedness to Eliot both in language and idea. The discrepancy between "The Lovers" and "Snow and Sleep" is obviously not due just to a contradiction of language, or to a variance of mood, but to that conflict between his ethical and political views so often present in Anderson's poems and never actually reconciled.

This same general conflict is central to the early poetry of Spender, and it is instructive to compare the manner in which the two poets deal with it. The criticism which I have been making of Anderson would apply in part to the early Spender: in certain poems his attempt to combine the communist and idealist viewpoints may also produce a sentimentalization of the theme (for example, in "The Funeral"). But, while this is true of some of Spender's early work, in general he has two distinct advantages over Anderson. In the first place he has handled the proletarian theme itself in a way that is more moving and more convincing. We find nothing to compare with poems such as "Speech From A Play" in Anderson, who deals most successfully with this theme in 'occasional' poems, and elsewhere reduces it to a mere didactic tag or replaces it with a vague abstraction. Secondly, some of Spender's best poems derive their value from the conflict itself and from the poet's realization of the irony involved in it. Anderson gives no proof that he would be capable of such a synthesis as one finds in "Not Palaces", or in the conclusion to "The Express":

Ah, like a comet through flames she moves entranced
Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough
Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal

—where the paradox of the whole position is forcefully realized, yet not without an ironic overtone. In such poems the intellectual statement does not override the emotional ambiguity, but rather develops out of it and elucidates its terms. But Anderson, while he achieves a vivid personal expression in such poems as "Summer's Joe", or a simple expression of the proletarian theme as in "Armaments Worker", has not succeeded in ordering his personal attitudes in objective social terms. He has aimed at a poetry of social comment, but his work is weak at precisely this point, leaving the impression that his central ideas and their conflict are simply counters in a technical strategy or bound to a psychological conflict which is not clearly perceived or ordered in the poetry.

We see this problem in clearer focus when we consider the third group of ideas in the poetry: what I shall refer to as the 'Freudian' ideas. Their role in the forefront of the poetry is a subordinate one; they play little part in the poems of the centre, although, as I shall hope to show, their connection with the 'centre' is closer than at first appears. They are generally employed in the depiction of narcissism, in poems of social criticism or of self-analysis, or in poems combining a subjective matter with an objective comment. Thus "Bombing Berlin" describes the decadence of the thirties:

The crime against humanity
was to consider oneself a master race:
one died because one was lonely
or too quiet to care,
became eccentric and dreamed too much
and talked to oneself all day
in the room littered with tears that were always untidy
and kept in cupboards and drawers
too many dead dry things,
too many whips and ribbons and photos of boys.

"Portrait", on the other hand, takes a personal approach, showing us how narcissism flourishes like a world within the social world:

the landlady knew neither his fear
nor his way with her furniture
nor how when fear drained fancy he would stare
in terrible vacancy

at a pattern of two roses round a twig
or the leather buttons walking her horsehair sofa.

Between these two passages, and the passage quoted below from "The Self Is Steep", there is, as the reader will see, a close resemblance in language as well as idea. Section three of "The Self Is Steep" presents the psychological theme in terms both of self-analysis and of an analysis of German fascism:

I know part of that frontier. It goes in rooms
has buttons on it, or hairs. It is to touch
self-hood or boredom or the furniture
which fingers travel till they trench or snap.

The litter of that dump is sourly lit
by a great unmade bed—a place of tears
and fingernails and things kept in a box
and touch kept in a track

. . . the murderer who hacks into a dream
the opposite body which will not approve

knows it, and the impacted bric-a-brac
of Germany, like a third-rate sitting room
grows dark and lonely with such love, such hate.

As I say, there is a close resemblance between the 'third-rate sitting room' of this passage, the 'room' of "Bombing Berlin" and the 'tea-brown room' referred to at the beginning of "Portrait" and described in its conclusion. This room, or perhaps I should say its contents, has a literary origin. The imagery of the three quotations is reminiscent of a sonnet of W. H. Auden's:

Deliberately he chose the dry-as-dust,
kept tears like dirty postcards in a drawer.

The resemblance between these two lines, and the lines from "Bombing Berlin" beginning 'in the room littered with tears', and the variation in "The Self Is Steep", 'a place of tears and fingernails and things kept in a box', is perhaps most striking, but clearly the mise-en-scene of all four quotations is the same. As the derivation suggests, Anderson's use of Freud owes something to the influence of Auden: however, the appearance of the same group of images, in poems written at different periods of time, and in a manner ultimately distinct from Auden, shows how deep-seated and personal is the psychological theme in Anderson's poetry.

There is no direct use of these Freudian ideas in the poems of the centre. The 'boy-men' who appear in "The Statues" are called 'inhibited heroes': they are, moreover, described in terms that em-

body the paradox of silence and excitement, stillness and motion. But, although they are 'inhibited heroes' who inhabit the 'vacant centres', the psychological implications of these 'centres', of their silence and excitement, are left unexplored. We will only find them explored in a poem such as "Winter In Montreal". In this poem, as in the "Poem On Canada", the poet makes a symbolic use of skiers, but the skiers have undergone a change. If, perhaps, they remain the same at bottom, they have acquired strange new qualities:

> Around me the skiers
> rushed silently. The snow like chloroform
> masked my face. And I turned to one
> of the skiers whose nervous curve neatly missed me
> and saw his heart spread out in a fluttering tartan
> for the delicate pleasures which he was suffering,
> and I said: Can you tell me? Is this Canadian,
> to ski—I mean, to dare so silently
> with nothing in front and blue behind like a railway?
> I waited for his answer but it was
> wafted away in the sanatorium snow
> where the skiers flushed like the hectic tubercular
> schussed down the fever of their feathery pillow.

The paradox of this passage is the familiar one of Anderson's poetry, involving violent movement in contrast with the absence or suspension of movement. The violent movement of the skiers is seen in relation to certain images of stillness: the skiers 'dare silently', they move through a snow like 'chloroform', or they schuss down the fever of their feathery *pillow*". Their silence and excitement, however, is of a different order than we have encountered before. It is presented as a psychological condition and in terms influenced by those of abnormal psychology: the skiers have a 'nervous curve', make a display of their 'fluttering' heart, wear a 'tubercular flush', etc. Perhaps we have no very precise notion from these phrases of what the psychological 'silence' and 'excitement' mean, but we can safely assume its likeness to the narcissism that figures in other Freudian poems.

The 'I' of the autobiographical "The Self Is Steep" sinks back from violent exertion to 'file away . . . upon some bed forgotten by the afternoon', much as these skiers 'schuss down the fever of their 'feathery pillow'. The 'I' is divided between two 'passionate acts' 'action' and 'sleep', (compare 'silence' and 'excitement') in a psychological state identified again as narcissism: 'I force into the open, slit and shout . . . to tear myself from being my own mother'. Narcissism

(Continued on p. 25)

Jack Humphrey

Jack Weldon Humphrey was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, in 1901. He began his art studies, consisting mainly of academic cast and life drawing, at the Boston Museum School.

He began painting in the Charles Hawthorne classes at the School of the National Academy of Design, New York. In New York he did uncongenial work at night and went to school during the day. He was a monitor and held a tuition scholarship in Charles Hawthorne's Cape Cod School of Art.

Through benefactors Humphrey spent nine months travelling in Europe, and studied briefly with Hans Hoffman, now in the United States. He returned to Saint John at the outset of the depression and struggled through the depression years in an environment that left something to be desired for the artist. He has concentrated mainly on still life and portrait studies in oil, and on landscape in water color, with an occasional experiment in figure painting.

In 1929 he had exhibited water colors with the Philadelphia Water Color Society and with the New York Water Color Club. He held his first one-man show of water colors at the Picture Loan Society, Toronto, from which two works were acquired by the National Gallery. His work has been included in exhibitions in the United States and abroad, as well as in shows in many Canadian cities.

Humphrey is a member of the Contemporary Arts Society, the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Color and of other artists' groups in Canada. He was on the art staff of Queen's University for 1945.

His painting is to be found in many private and public collections. These include the National Gallery, the Art Gallery of Toronto, the New Brunswick Museum, Hart House, the Vincent Massey collection and the J. S. Maclean collection.

JOANNE

LITTLE HORSE AND BEECHLEAVES

A Note By The Artist

It is usually by looking back rather than forward that an artist who has been producing for a time can best estimate what in his work can be described as his aims. As a painter I have proceeded quite simply from objective nature to the effort to create a synthesis. I seldom work from memory, and illustration and the anecdote are almost never my point of departure.

As I have found it, there are three things that come into the synthesis: the artist, objective nature and the result—the visual organism. In this result, at its best, I feel that there is something drawn in from outside which is perhaps superhuman. It is this indescribable quality which gives art its ever-powerful fascination.

I look to Rembrandt and El Greco, to Cezanne, even to Picasso, as typical grand masters of the formal synthesis. In Rembrandt, psychological elements, 'humanity', are more important than in the others, who in varying degree and kind have built powerful expressive form.

Once a painter has learned enough about his craft it is of the utmost importance that he bring all the activity of his perception, of his will and his instinct to making his work live with qualities discovered within and without. So with me, when painting has gone well it has been the sought-out subject, usually from objective nature or human model, transformed and rebuilt in terms of the painter's craft and effective visual means. These latter are manifest in character, thick space, color, variety, proportion, movement and all the rest. My immediate concern seems to be with, 'What color and where?'

In my water colors there is almost always the beginning with objective nature, the subject selected for its color and its space possibilities and its character; also, at times, its enchantment. Sometimes the development tends to be more formal, with its own life of color, balanced space, movement and proportion. At other times the painting gets very close to the observed character of nature, with its moods as they are impressed upon the sensibility of the painter.

In figure painting—I term it that rather than portrait painting because it is done for the sake of the most all-inclusive synthesis possible rather than to please someone by depicting some or other facial expression—I try to include the specific essential character of the model and when the work has gone well there seems to be something more than literal model or careful workmanship.

Jack Humphrey

(Continued from p. 20)

is presented as a psychological dualism with three main aspects. First this dualism is a conflict between puritanism and sex, between a puritanism that is broken into and destroyed by sex but as often re-asserts itself. The purity and innocence represented by the symbol of the child (employed in this poem on three occasions) is identified with a puritanism opposed to sex in the passage already quoted from:

> I force into the open, slit and shout
> to tear myself from being my own mother,
> as blood bursts from a vein or the sex comes out.

Second, the dualism is seen in terms of male and female sex. The feminine attitude is represented by the 'mother' in the same quotation, and by the 'golden barn of Bethlehem', and the masculine attitude by the images of the orator, the flame-thrower and the soldier as they occur through the poem. Third, this dualism, although real in its effect on the poet's present attitudes and behaviour, is unreal in relation to the repressed self to which it denies expression (an unreality conveyed by an uneasy fusion between the opposing attitudes in such phrases as 'rash tiredness' and 'soldier caring not to conquer'). The whole duality is summed up in the 'passionate acts, action or sleep': action is identified with sex and masculinity, sleep with puritanism and femininity.

In "The Self Is Steep" the poet is attempting self-analysis and at the same time intending to make certain comments on his poetry. First of all, he identifies those ethical and political ideas which are prominent in his poetry in order to demonstrate their contradictory nature. He opposes them in the lines

> . . . advanced by hands,
> and then in failure of compulsive fire
> red birth in my face, not born, but blush
> about my wicker tower of almost being

—where the unachieved 'birth' (symbolically 'red') refers to that effort at self-fulfillment through politics, and the 'tower of almost being' to an ideal of selfhood which political activity cannot satisfy. The same opposition is made further on:

> Either to action forced, or sunk. Unborn
> or, bearing wild, go like the flame-thrower
> to kindle killing in a roar
> and sear the golden barn of Bethlehem—
> (O Jesus!) being destroyer of being born!

The 'flame-thrower' represents the revolutionary faith, and the 'gol-

den barn of Bethlehem' the ethical and religious point of view. Realizing that these are mutually destructive ideas, the poet then seeks to explain their presence in his poetry. He tells us that they are the surface expression of the psychological duality. At bottom he adopts revolutionary politics in obedience to a certain ideal of aggressive action, or of masculinity, which he hopes to beguile with proletarian subterfuges: nevertheless, he cannot discard his Christian inheritance, or change an almost obsessive idealism that springs from something puritanical and feminine in his nature. These leading ideas of the poetry are counters in a psychological game, in which the 'action' and 'sleep' divide the personality like two separate selves: the intellectual cul-de-sac is simply the expression of this psychological cul-de-sac. This is the first important comment on the poetry in "The Self Is Steep": the second broadens this account of its intellectual content to include its creative impulse. Returning to the passages just quoted, we see that they confirm an argument made earlier in this essay: namely, that the political content is identified with the imagery of motion, and the ethical content with the imagery of stillness. In the first passage, the 'red birth' is a form of motion ('advanced by hands') frustrated by the stationary 'tower of almost being'; in the second passage, the violent movement of the 'flame-thrower' is rendered abortive by the 'golden barn of Bethlehem'. What is true here applies to the poem as a whole. The two types of images alternate through the whole poem in a pattern identical with that of the two psychological states or 'acts', so that 'action' is always expressed by imagery of motion and 'sleep' by imagery of stillness. Indeed, the two types of images are employed almost as substitutes for action and sleep, and as if they were not merely the expressions of the two 'acts' but identified with them. If this identification seems incongruous, we must remember that action and sleep are regarded *as images* of the real self that remains 'undecided'.

The relation of the analysis in this poem to the white centre is sufficiently clear. The 'undecided' self is plainly linked to the skiers and the statues, 'looming and hesitating', and represents the centre in this section of "The Self Is Steep". The centre in this psychological sense is the origin of the poetry itself. We have reached the tentative conclusion that the stillness and motion of this centre are two images or projections of the self that operate in the creative process. Let us now glance again at what we have called the 'problem' of Anderson's poetry to see in what more specific sense this conclusion applies to it.

In drawing the comparison between Anderson and Spender, I summed up Anderson's problem by saying that he had been unable to objectify his own personal emotions or conflicts in terms of social significance. "The Self Is Steep" has shown us how the ostensibly objective content of the poetry—that is, its ideas—is negated and rendered contradictory by emotional conflicts. Of still more importance, is the way in which these emotional conflicts are defined. Action and sleep, stillness and motion, are described in "The Self Is Steep" as conflicting 'passionate acts'. Yet at certain moments they fuse into a single attitude or act, and their conflict becomes meaningless; at certain moments they are less an expression of the self than a parody or mimicry of it: they are then not genuine passionate acts, but only the images of passionate acts. "The Self Is Steep" tells us, not only that the objective content of the poetry is determined by a conflict in the poet, but by a conflict that is only the shadow-play of passion; and, moreover, that the emotion of the poetry in general is based on unreality and is ultimately only an image of emotion. Possessing these facts, we can come to a much clearer view of what Anderson can achieve and what his limitations are.

Anderson has been most strongly moved by what he feels as a need for self-identity. For this reason the poems in "The White Centre" and "A Tent For April" have been devoted to two main purposes: first, to a picture of the self alienated in a mechanical society, and, second, to a prophecy of a future in which such an alienation will become impossible and the self will be able to play a creative social role. Marxism has so far been the most important determinant in the poetry, because Marxism alone seemed able to create such a future, and because it held out to him personally a hope for self-identity and seemed to promise some of the benefits of the new world in advance to its followers. In his poetry, therefore, he should have been able to convey both the sense of acute loss and isolation, and the feeling of violence in a world caught in the throes of change. But this, we can now see, is just what the nature of the poetry would prevent him from doing. How can one express acute personal loss or revolutionary violence in a poetry that is distinguished by its fluid rhythm, its silken music, its perfectly equable tone? A balanced calmness of mood pervades all the poems of Patrick Anderson, giving them a distinct charm, but making them a very poor medium for the expression of disturbance, whether individual or social. The conscious direction of the poetry is towards self-identity; but this is constantly belied by the impression that a positive identity has already been achieved through

the poetry itself. From the conscious effort to image the self in its surroundings, we receive no valid picture of society; rather the social environment is no more than a mirror in which we perceive the image of a self whose 'action' or 'sleep' are only shapes in a dream of motion and decidedly lacking in passion. A convenient illustration of this point is Mr. Anderson's use of philosophic abstractions. 'History', 'love', 'science', 'politics', etc., appear so often and so obtrusively in the poetry that they gradually lose all objective meaning. They even cease in a sense to be ideas. They are so inimitable a part of the music and of the flowing rhythm that they lose their intellectual significance and begin to function almost as metaphors or images. They become images insofar as they are no longer counters on an external checkerboard but ways to catch a reflection of the self. Consider these lines from "Late Working":

> Sometimes he seemed to crouch
> hunchbacked with history
> at the desk that was left
> but at other times the dead
> roared in his ears
> propelled him forward for their talking comrade.

'History' in this passage is no more than an annex of the body, an excrescent shoulder blade; the 'dead'—the 'people'—are only a noise in one's ears at night. There are many passages like this where the abstract idea becomes the mirror of the static or moving self: they sum up very nicely the relation of the poet to the social environment.

The intention of the poetry, then, is at odds with the mood and the poetic impulse; the conscious search for identity in the social world is belied by the sense of identity already achieved within the self: such is the conclusion of "The Self Is Steep". 'Action' and 'sleep' are, it is true, in frequent opposition and conflict; but there are certain moments when they fuse into one. They are two opposed images of the self, but they join and make one and an identity of a kind is achieved. A truce is established between the two images: in the moments of truce, when action and sleep fuse and interact, the poetry is written. The poetry depends on the contact and identity of the two images; and the external world is only the mirror that makes the contact and identity possible.

"The Self Is Steep" shows us how the striving towards social identity is a mask for a kind of identity already achieved within the self. Clearly, however, the 'stillness' and 'motion' determine not only the poet's relation with society, but with the external world in general.

The image in the first stanza of section two of "The Self Is Steep" ('the window-box a piano that I play . . . and drench in primroses that make no notes') is a most characteristic one. Compare with it images such as those I quoted at the beginning of the essay: the description of the mirror 'polishing the bright badge on its cap', or of the window-ledge with the 'cripple crack that suddenly hurls its crutches . . . amongst the children playing in the sun', or, on a larger scale, the treatment of the landscape in "Camp". A great many passages of description involve such animation of the unliving world, and depend, directly or indirectly, on an almost physical identification of the poet with the thing described. What is inanimate and static thereby acquires motion, and embarks on a course determined by the contrast between its normal static condition and its newly-acquired power. Here, once again, the subjective pattern of stillness and motion asserts itself.

In the remainder of the essay I wish to show this psychological fact in operation in a particular poem, and to demonstrate further its role in the technique.

Let us see, then, how it affects one of the better-known poems in which Marxist ideas are employed—"Landscape", for example. I choose "Landscape", partly because it is a typical poem, and partly because its meaning was in dispute between Mr. A. J. M. Smith and myself following his "Canadian Forum" review of "The White Centre". Mr. Smith labelled this poem 'Wordsworthian'; then, in answering my criticism, abandoned this term but insisted that "Landscape" was a nature poem. That its concluding lines are neither Wordsworthian nor concerned with 'nature' in the accepted sense is perhaps obvious:

> O welcome the medicine man with the gay moral
> whose lovely politics are entirely love,
> who says that he is responsible to these hills—
> in him they shall move.

Whether such phrases as 'lovely politics' are valid or not, the identification of love and politics is so frequent in Anderson that we cannot doubt he intends a political meaning. In fact the identical meaning is to be found in a number of other poems, including "Ski Train", "Canadian Scene" (part two) and "Poem On Canada" (section five). Compare the stanza quoted with the description of history in stanza three of "Ski Train" ('In history . . . we act and think like that, turn and are carried'), or the very similar description of the future in the final lines:

> Tomorrow's blinding slopes
> will shine and sail beneath them. Dazzle and dip
> into the meaning that is always moving—
> climbing a landscape, falling into it—
> and they'll sluice by, spray at a turn, and lean
> against a future which they dare not mean.

Through the symbols of the winter landscape and the moving skiers, the poet intends to express a Marxist conception which the critic, Christopher Caudwell, describes as 'the struggle of man the subject with nature the object'. Anderson has attempted a prose definition of this 'struggle' in an essay on Rilke's letters, referring to an attitude that 'supplants both a mechanistic naturalism and a romantic subjectivity by a realism which recognizes the dynamic interrelation of subject and object'. The skiers and landscape of "Ski Train" are meant to embody this 'realism': they obviously play the same role as the 'man' and the 'hills' in the final stanza of "Landscape". The hills and the man in that stanza express the 'dynamic interrelation of subject and object': so do the images in those lines which conclude each stanza almost in the manner of a refrain ('the emptiness is always the arena . . . where you are the one', and so on). The intended meaning of "Landscape" can fairly be described as 'political' and 'Marxist'. Mr. Smith is therefore wrong; but he is wrong only in his application of what is an excellent point: namely that the detailed nature imagery of the poem cannot be reconciled with such a theme. If the 'hills' of the last stanza symbolize 'nature the object', what, Mr. Smith would ask, are we to make of the grass and swans, the birds and blossoms and other natural objects distributed so liberally through the poem? The answer to the question must be a tentative one: almost, but not quite nothing. It is true that the nature imagery is out of place, and disrupts the poem because it is not subordinated to the theme. Nevertheless, the imagery appears in the poem for a certain reason, and its connection with the theme can be explained. Both theme and imagery are limited by the narcissistic sensibility. The imagery is less reminiscent of Wordsworth than of such a contemporary as D. H. Lawrence for it depends on the physical contact or identification of the body with the natural object:

> Whether your journey is paved with the petals of flowers
> or with the chords of waves on the piano sea,
> amongst vowels of water or in the grammar of stones
> the lovely is empty

Clearly, such imagery is mistaken, not only because it is left unrelated

to the Marxist theme, but because it is different in meaning and quality from the theme. It has too soft and delicate a texture; it evokes only a pleasantly nostalgic feeling: most important, it assumes an identity and synthesis of the body with the environment that is only imaginary, whereas Marxism insists on the real relation of subject and object in motion towards a synthesis. The same criticism applies to the conclusion. The 'hills' of the last stanza are clear enough in intention, but they are not adequate for the idea. They give an imaginary sense of physical contact and identification (as they 'move in' the 'responsible' man) that is in direct opposition to the 'dynamic interrelation of subject and object': the 'dynamic interrelation' is no more than a mask for their 'romantic subjectivity'. When, at the last minute, the 'Marxism' is reinforced with the idealist point of view, and the 'lovely politics' become 'entirely love', we have a nice illustration of how the ideas of the poetry are distorted by the sensibility. Rather than any objective comment, the final lines contain a picture of the static and n oving self, represented on the technical level by the interaction of 'hills' and 'man' and on the abstract level by the fusion of 'love' and 'politics'. They simply illustrate the analysis of "The Self Is Steep".

The whole effort to link the sensibility to abstract points of view reveals its limitations in the most unfavourable light and forces hidden conflicts to the surface. The results are visible, not only in an unnatural quality of emotion, but in an artificiality of technique. I shall approach the question of the technique by a discussion of "Mother's Boy", a poem certainly autobiographical in its implications and perhaps also in its intent. Here it is in full:

The white and gold theatre
of his fearless face
plays the world's rage:
the cool proscenium brow
and the hair's banner—
the repertory of a hideous age.

He is the little theatre
art-loving mothers plan
and fathers pay for:
whose scenery is green
and whose enchanted distance
drenched with azure.

Now in war's social change
his pure artistic sense

must fortify its strength
with awkward violence:
he must in public play
puns and fists all day
and die with an intense
popular poetry—
delivering in a passion from the boards
Will Shakespeare's household words.

Here is that same duality which we found in "The Self Is Steep". The contrast in that poem between action and sleep is the contrast here between the 'world's rage' and the 'enchanted distance drenched with azure'; the 'white and gold . . . face' and the 'cool proscenium brow' symbolize the puritanism which the 'I' of "The Self Is Steep" attacks with such violence; the actor here tries to escape from the 'enchanted distance' of the mother's dream as the 'declarant one, the orator' seeks to 'tear himself from being his own mother'; and, finally, the unreality of this opposition is duplicated in "Mother's Boy" by the alternation of roles in what is essentially a psychological melodrama. But while "The Self Is Steep" presents this dualism in terms of the ideas and the poetic impulse, "Mother's Boy" presents it in terms of two types of rhetorical exaggeration. The types of rhetoric are defined in a metaphor of the stage, but they are in reality the imagery of motion and the imagery of stillness in Anderson's poetry. In stanzas one and two the 'cool proscenium brow' and the 'enchanted distance' recall the descriptions of the lovers and the athletes, and are in fact generically related to the 'snow' and 'light' and 'stone' and the other images of stillness. They contain a criticism which applies to those images: the 'whiteness' and the 'light' acquire a romantic vagueness from the idea of love they express, and are soon as stereotyped in their author's use as the cliches of the melodrama. Similarly, in the final stanza, the 'puns and fists' and 'awkward violence' represent the imagery of motion and indicate its weaknesses. Striving to convey life's 'awkward violence' by images of motion, Anderson can be euphuistic as in this description of beer-glasses

whose tight-rope rims flecked with foam
summon the balled delicacy of the forefinger

or obscure as in

the gloved and female gash
of a great wound sliding into a soldier's body

or satanic as in

little Franco strutting in Spain's pus

In short, the quality of melodrama is also inherent in these images of motion. They are most obtrusive in sharp contrast with the images of stillness, for, as "Mother's Boy" suggests, one type of image conditions the other and provokes its extremes. What is tiring about Anderson's poetry read in quantity, is not so much inherent in one type of image or the other, as in their constant, unreal opposition: the 'puns and fists' erupt in the green and azure scenery, not like genuine puns and fists but like surrealistic shapes that may disappear again at any moment. Many otherwise good poems are spoiled by lines that 'summon the balled delicacy of the forefinger' to an exhibition of statuesque athletics.

Such criticisms are made in the light of the fact that Mr. Anderson is a young poet, with the limitations of the young poet but with an undoubted capacity for growth. I have done no more in this essay than explicate the self-criticism to be found in "The White Centre" and "A Tent For April", much of it already put to work in the later poems of those volumes or in poems published since their appearance. "The Statues", placed significantly at the end of the second volume, indicates a change in his point of view and in his poetic approach. When he asks of the statues, who symbolize the 'platonic essence',

> Are they, really, cowards
>
> behind the muslin curtains of each era
> looming, and hesitating? Who've never stood
> at the slum door . . . ?

we may assume, remembering other poems where the question was vital but never so explicit, that the important word for the poet is that 'really' surrounded by its two emphatic commas. It is the important word because he has always given two conflicting answers to this question. The first answer, and the most common one in the earliest poems was in the affirmative and said that the aloof idealists are really cowards; the second answer stated ambiguously that the ideal love of comrades was automatically a form of social architecture: now "The Statues" lays bare their contradiction, giving a third answer that represents a basic change of view. The fact that the conclusion of the poem is still questioning in attitude indicates one aspect of the change:

> should we leave them in
> the civic yawns of squares, the vacant centres
> under the flags, by the whipped posts, where
>
> frescoes of slogans can be left, forgotten . . . ?

Obscure, exasperating is their beauty

as is the impoverished beauty of our own
young men and girls who wear against their limbs
nun's white, tomb's white, the colour of museums,

skylights and visions, absent-mindedness.
I am reminded in this haunted place
of things not owned, of the inhibited hero . . .

The statues are not cowards towards life, because they exist in living form in the 'impoverished beauty of our own . . . young men and girls'. At first sight this answer seems to take sides in the argument, sustaining the Ideal against the reality symbolized by the 'slum door' and so duplicating the viewpoint of "The Lovers". But the ideal of love which figures in "The Lovers", or in "Armaments Worker", is the possession only of the property-less class or of the intellectual leaders of that class: at the end of this poem the statues are divorced from the context of the intellectual argument—Plato versus Marx—because the poet is anxious neither to assert nor deny that love is the property of a class, giving it instead a broadly human designation. Insofar as Anderson wishes to remove himself from 'such love, such hate' as arise in his poetry from class valuings, exaggerating his conflicts and entangling him in contradictions, the solution is a healthy sign for his poetic development. Of equal significance is his apparent resolution to avoid didacticism and the habit of thinking in closed compartments that so often creates a dissonance in these early poems. Clearly Anderson cannot sustain a poetry of social criticism, or cannot do so at his present stage. In "The Statues", and in still later poems marking a distinct break with his earlier work, he is less concerned to tell us what he or others have thought than what he personally feels and believes. He will do well to avoid the intellectual stereotypes of the white centre, for his talents obviously lie in the more lyrical direction of poems such as "Camp" or "Hunter Returning" or the "Song From A Play" in this issue of "Northern Review". These poems may employ an imagery of motion, but they do so in strict deference to a simple theme and mood, achieving a balance between the sensibility and the external world. The matter with being lost in a dream of motion was partly that it was so intellectual a dream and partly that it was no more than a dream.

For Mrs. Shaw

J. W. Lieber

from The McGill Forge

Mrs. Shaw, the janitress, a widow, keeps
canaries in apartment number one.
She breeds the birds and sells them when she needs
more funds. This often happens when it's cold
especially in winter and her legs
and back so pain her that she goes to bed.

Upon the dresser just beside her bed
she stores her bird-seed, family bible, keeps
a liniment she rubs upon her legs.
It doesn't seem to do much good, but one
can't go to California when it's cold
and it is warmth the body badly needs.

Her hot plate does her simple cooking needs
so well she hardly has to leave the bed
to fry a bit of sausage. When the cold
creeps through her room, sets on her breath, she keeps
the burner on a little longer, takes one
small sip of precious brandy, rubs her legs.

The swollen veins upon her heavy legs
are sheathed in rubber which belies the needs
she feels for lenitive: she dreams some one
is still with her, sits next her on the bed,
talks gently, smooths the rumpled covers, keeps
her warmth within, around, against the cold,

against a sharper pierce than winter cold.
But of a sudden a new stab in her legs—
a sickening panic stirs within her, keeps
her eyes closed peering into pain. Her needs
are greater than the comfort of the bed,
beyond the nursing solace of anyone

except the tenderness of Him whose one
anointed died (she knows) for her. The cold
becomes a peace, a sleep upon a bed
far softer than any that her aching legs
had known. The quarreling canaries need
some seed and chirp a requiem for their keep.

How still she keeps herself. Allow not one
whose pity needs a whimper, whisper. Cold
her back and legs: she will not rise from bed.

Two Poems

Francis Barry

THE SPINNING QUESTION

Hearing below the chatter of the guests
—and hers, to whom he thinks he is the sun
pacing the air's cloud-garden—he divests
of foreign meanings now the flesh has done
with indecision and has tossed his head
away and sprung his heart and so devolved
into a nameless corpse among the dead
till she hand back the spinning question solved.
He argues with his tie and sees his hair
go galloping away with every stroke,
then executioners descend the stair
with him, and all his cool rehearsals choke.

But she—she handles all the far relations
oblivious of the pre-dawn pangs of nations!

RETURN

The frosty caverns of her mind admit
Her long-lost Crusoe clad in rags of hate.
She keeps her sharpened icicles of wit
At hand to stab him if he should relate
All his adventures—chanting savages
Ringing a primal fire against the brand
Of death; love's simple highnote, under press
Of swollen noontide in a bone-bleached land;
The vicious virtue of the naked. —What
Can steepled Sunday know of Friday's guilt,
Of bartered humans, of the green mirage
Redemption tempts the damned with? Lest they kiss,
She steadily regards her knitted quilt,
Hearing alone the Eden serpent hiss.

Film

Guy Glover

REALISM AND POETRY IN THE FILM

If I were asked to pick the most remarkable film I have seen so far in 1949, I should find it hard not to decide on "The Quiet One", produced by Film Documents, Inc. of New York, and completed late last summer. The film was originally made in 16 mm., but has since been 'blown up' to 35 mm. for theatrical release. It was two years in production, and the love and care lavished on it show plainly enough.

"The Quiet One" tells the story of a negro boy, Donald—about ten years old—who, because of bad home conditions, becomes a 'juvenile delinquent' and is eventually sent to Wiltwyck School, an institution devoted to the correction of personality problems in boys,

many of them negroes. The picture shows the background of Donald's family life, outlining its economic and social characteristics. It suggests how Donald developed mentally in this environment, and follows the key steps of his development into a 'problem child'; how the counsellors of the school went about rehabilitating him; and how, in the end, Donald worked through to a new and more normal attitude to his surroundings.

The film is a strong statement on the relationship between environment and psychological (and social) behaviour. It pulls no punches in its attempt to drive home important truths and, for the most part, it does this without editorializing. Everyone should know the facts which "The Quiet One" seeks to present, but I do not intend to discuss them further.

I should, however, like to point out how the film gets some of its effects, and its importance as a piece of cinema.

The economics of the commercial documentary film in recent years have permitted only the 'one-reeler' (ten-minute film) to achieve much distribution (and therefore, production), although the two-reeler has some chance. If a film gets to be longer than twenty minutes its chances are poor, and this does not apply only to its theatrical distribution. The producers of "The Quiet One" ignored this straight-jacket, and made their film over an hour long. This length permits them to present their material in a more leisurely (and more thorough) manner than is usual in most documentaries today, and in this "The Quiet One" harks back to an earlier period when, to be 'documentary' meant to take time enough to bring your audience close to a subject and allow them to know it as intimately as possible.

The producers of this film were faced with the necessity of recreating a series of events many of which were dramatic and intensely emotional—in other words, their material was not the usual 'documentary subject'. Their problem was to make their audience react as directly as possible to these events, and to allow them as little opportunity as possible to evade the force and implication of the events by that endemic escape-mechanism (which is just as powerful as a subconscious factor, as when it is expressed outright)—'Oh, it's just a movie, anyway!' etc. This problem, of course, faces all the time all makers of factual films, and a history of the *genre* could be written from the point of view of how different directors have solved (or evaded or muffed) it.

Those concerned in the making of "The Quiet One" have been very clever in dealing with this aspect of their job. They have

devised a striking opening, in which the fantastic child-world of Wiltwyck school is suggested and Donald and his neurotic attitude are established. Then the film moves back rapidly into the boy's immediate past, and plunges us into the Harlem slums for a long sequence. Donald wanders aimlessly through the streets, and the camera (sometimes seeing him and sometimes seeing what he sees) observes what anyone can see is the unstaged, unrehearsed life of that area of New York. This sequence is so penetratingly photographed and piles up such a relentless eye-witness of actuality, that the sense of factual reality it creates carries forward into the rest of the film, integrating into an organic whole the later staged scenes, and imposing on them an actuality which an audience is not likely to be able to evade by any of its usual dodges. This, in my view, is the secret of the over-all power of "The Quiet One".

Notes on Technique

1. Dialogue:

The dialogue is unsynchronized or loosely post-synchronized, and is used mostly to create atmosphere, rather than to convey information as such. It does not dominate the montage, as it usually does in the average entertainment film. The movement of the visuals (i.e. the way they are cut together) is thus unhampered. In a good film you lose a lot by closing your eyes, and not much when you stop your ears. It is the other way round with stage plays.

2. Commentary:

The commentary is relatively sparse, as would be expected from the above, and is to the point. I object to several instances of psychoanalytic jargon, but these are few enough in a film which, after all, is presenting its subject in psychoanalytical terms. The language strikes a nice balance between factual statement and evocative prose.

3. Music and Sound Effects:

The music is adequate, although it fails at times to play a positive enough role. On the other hand, it never obtrudes. The sound effects are good, and are important in establishing not only atmosphere but, in some instances, meaning.

4. Photography and Montage:

One can only suggest that these are excellent. There is a wide range of photographic effects. Extreme close-ups (an eye or a mouth filling the screen, for instance) are used more often than usual; and profound depth-of-field is frequently employed (objects in distance and close to camera in sharp focus) to pack significance into individual

shots. Low-key lighting is used appropriately throughout some sequences. None of these points is particularly remarkable in itself, but each is used with remarkable intelligence and sensitivity. Most of all, one is struck by the fact that the shots making up "The Quiet One" were planned for the montage—and not the other way round as is so often the case; and the montage itself is rich and full of interest.

5. Form:

The form of this film is that of a narrative which moves forward, then back, then forward again in time. It makes use of typical filmic devices for time-compression, and the linkages between the different sections are most ingenious and always illuminating. In the complex movement of the film one never loses one's way.

The choice of sequences and the choice of individual shots throughout the film have been made on the basis of a close knowledge of psychoanalytic theory and practice. The audience advances through the story sometimes subjectively (i.e. seeing things through Donald's eyes and sensibility), sometimes objectively (i.e. seeing Donald through the eyes of an on-the-spot observer). The dual approach is very subtle, however, and one is not wrenched awkwardly from one point of view to the other. This smooth passage from subjective to objective point of view is achieved because the producers have been particularly clever in their choice of the images and sequences which present the objective viewpoint. These are often poetic or symbolic, and are photographed and mounted in such a way that, although we are *looking at* the boy in a certain series of actions, our reactions parallel his actions. By empathy (and kinesthesia) we live, for the moment, the kind of experience we are watching him have. Were the scenes, in which this type of treatment operates, not correctly chosen, this would be impossible. It is because these images have the universal quality of dreams or the almost forgotten fantasies of our own past, that they strike us so surely and so powerfully. "The Quiet One" is an example of the successful use of the psychoanalytic method in film. As such it should interest workers in other media in which that method has been used with grotesque carelessness.

Conclusion:

"The Quiet One" shows at least one other characteristic of general interest: that poetry is possible when realism is used selectively; and, as a sort of corollary to this, that 'bite' is given to realism by poetry. I need scarcely add that I mean poetry in the very broadest sense. The didactic punch which "The Quiet One" delivers is indeed

a 'punch' because the poetry releases the emotional energy of the realism. Without the poetry the content would have been locked safely onto the screen in a series of reportorial images to be observed and accepted intellectually by some of us (and subsequently escaped from) or to be rejected outright by others of us, as 'just one of those pictures' (and escaped from even more rapidly).

"The Quiet One"*, almost alone among current movies, reminds us that, after all, there is no great problem in dealing with poetry and realism in cinema. It does this by demonstrating once again that each of them is an aspect of the other. It suggests, moreover, that those who treat poetry and realism as incompatibles are rejecting at least half of their artistic birthright.

*"The Quiet One" (U. S. A., 1948).

Produced by Film Documents Inc., New York, N. Y.
Script: Janice Loeb & Helen Levitt
Direction: Sidney Meyers
Camera: Helen Levitt and Richard Bagley
Montage: Sidney Meyers
Music: Ulysses Kay
Commentary: James Agee
Psychiatry Consultant: Dr. Viola Bernard

Reviews

THE RICH MAN by Henry Kreisel. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.

Rich man, poor man, beggar man or thief—it all depends, according to the delightful fantasy of childhood, on the number of buttons on your coat. And if the vicissitudes of life are not in fact so easily manipulated, it is true at least that fantasy can round the sharp edge.

So it was for Jacob Grossman. An insignificant presser in a Toronto clothing factory, he staked his meagre savings on a quick cast for pleasure and visited his family in his native Austria after thirty-three years of separation. Obviously the journey was not without triumph. He bought a white linen suit and elaborate presents, and heaped satisfaction upon accomplishment by treating himself to the innocent fiction of prosperity.

At least this make-believe seemed innocent. It dispersed the steamy memories of the clothing factory; it deferred the reality of returning. But it also had repercussions. They entoil Jacob in a situation as real as the political uncertainty of the times (1935).

It is this situation that is the core of the book and the basis of its valid claim to merit. At that it is not worthy of the extravagant praise it has received, but it is a good story well told. The denouement demonstrates the capability of the author. With good taste and a careful economy of expression, he achieves a sensitive handling of a difficult problem—a pathetic incident that is made neither callous with laughter nor maudlin with tears.

But for the first 150 pages the reader must be patient. There is not enough in them to induce him to go on. The story in fact does not begin until Chapter Eleven. The first ten are persiflage, only background and beginnings, and though it can be argued that these are the mechanics necessary to any story, it can also be argued that they should be made an integral part of the fabric of fascination to be spun round the reader. An author seldom intends to be dull, but in this case the author is. And yet, when he finally comes to grips with

his plot, he shows clearly that he can handle its components with skill and adroitness. "The Rich Man" is a sincerely told story, and extremely promising.

It is a 'first novel', but the publisher gives the reader notice that a second is 'well under way'. It is to be hoped that, regardless of the interest with which another novel by Mr. Kreisel may be looked for, this new one is not under way only as a result of external stimuli. Quite naturally, all publishers are looking for a goose that will lay eggs even slightly gilded, but artificial insemination in the form of uncritical praise, flattering urgency and binding advances will surely kill the goose. It will ruin Mr. Kreisel just as surely as it has ruined many other promising authors. Let Mr. Kreisel take his own time and develop at his own pace, and we can confidently look to him for future work that is mature, sensitive and meaningful.

R. G. Simpson

A Celebration For Edith Sitwell. New Directions, Norfolk, Conn. $1.50. 144 pages.

This celebration takes the form of a dozen or so very enthusiastic appraisals of Edith Sitwell's poetry by such literary gods as Charles Morgan, Stephen Spender and L. P. Hartley; an extract from a letter of Yeats comparing the author of "Gold Coast Customs" to the author of "Gulliver's Travels"; something by Miss Stein called "Sitwell Edith Sitwell" in which the earth-shaking remark is made that 'This is for her and not for Mabel Weeks'. The selection of Miss Sitwell's later poetry containing one of her most wonderful images (the Sun, 'a dead king in my golden armour somewhere in a dark wood') is, it seems, something that rises above the Celebration and something that sufficiently celebrates itself.

J. R.

The Stature of Thomas Mann, edited by Charles Neider. New Directions, Norfolk, Conn.

The positive aspects of this anthology of Mann criticism are obvious. It is a very good thing that so many essays, scattered through inaccessible publications and very often untranslated, have been brought together in a single English volume. And that, as well as essays by the best Mann-critics, Weigand, Slochower and others, there are in the 'Comparative' section excellent pieces such as Kenneth Burke's "Thomas Mann and Andre Gide" and Bergel's "Thomas Mann and Benedetto Croce". The book's weaknesses, apart from its overdone 'Personal' section, are largely Mann's fault for being his own best critic. And for those who feel themselves short on personal data, it is a Two-in-One buy.

J. B. S.

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